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NEA/ARP FOR BAGWELL AND MASILKO

NO FORN

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [AE](#)

SUBJECT: DUBAI DESIGNATES CROWN PRINCE AND DEPUTY RULER

REF: 07 DUBAI 231

CLASSIFIED BY: David Williams, Acting Consul General, Consulate
Dubai, DOS.

REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

¶1. (U) Summary: On February 1, 2008, Sheikh Mohammad bin Rashid Al Maktoum (MbR), Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, appointed his second eldest son, Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammad Al Maktoum (HbM), Crown Prince of Dubai. The appointment of the 25-year-old heir apparent was not a surprise; MbR had been increasing his son's visibility through high level government assignments and unofficial publicity campaigns over the past several years. Consolidating the Dubai government's succession planning, MbR also appointed another son, Sheikh Maktoum bin Mohammad Al Maktoum (MbM), as Deputy Ruler of Dubai. For now, MbM will share responsibilities as Deputy Ruler with Sheikh Hamdan bin Rashid Al Maktoum. (Hamdan bin Rashid is MbR's older brother who was named Deputy Ruler of Dubai in 1995, the same year MbR assumed his role of Crown Prince. Sheikh Hamdan also serves as the UAE Minister of Finance and Industry). End summary.

¶2. (C/NF) As mentioned reftel, HbM was born on November 14, 1982 and is MbR's second oldest son by his first official wife, Sheikha Hind bint Maktoum bin Jumma. MbR's oldest son, Rashid, does not play a public role in Dubai affairs. (Note: It is alleged that Rashid killed an assistant in the Ruler's office, thereby forfeiting his opportunity to be heir. Post believes MbR has a total of 20 children from both his official and unofficial wives. End note). HbM graduated from Sandhurst Royal Military College in 2001 and the following year was appointed chairman of Dubai Bank.

¶3. (U) In September 2006, HbM was elevated to the high visibility role of Chairman of the Dubai Executive Council, entrusted with overseeing all Dubai government entities and the completion of the 2015 Dubai Strategic Plan. He is currently president of the Dubai Sports Council, the Dubai Autism Centre and the MbR Establishment for Young Business Leaders.

¶4. (C) Some of HbM's most talked about qualities are his passions for poetry and sport. The Crown Prince goes by the poetic pseudonym 'Fazza', a reference to an Arab knight of exceptional ethics. His poetry has been turned into popular, trendy songs, and upon his arrival at public gatherings, young locals often give him a greeting reminiscent of those western youths bestow upon their pop idols. He is an enthusiastic athlete and an avid horseman.

¶5. (U) HbM's designation as Crown Prince has been warmly received by Dubai locals, with the local press describing it as a dynamic move that puts the future of Dubai into the hands of confident young leaders. The designations were met with great fanfare, including heavy press coverage, a number of formal "meet the new leaders" events (including two involving the diplomatic corps), and the release of 216 inmates from Dubai prisons as a gesture of goodwill to commemorate the occasion.

¶6. (C/NF) Post has little information about MbM, HbM's younger, full brother. MbM was born in 1983, also to Sheikha Hind, and is a graduate of the American University of Dubai. As chairman of the Dubai Technology and Media Free Zone, he oversaw the expansion of Dubai Media City, Dubai Internet City and Knowledge Village. He has maintained a relatively low public profile.

¶7. (C/NF) Comment: As reported reftel, Post has seen little evidence of HbM's engagement on international political issues and limited evidence of his true abilities or long-term political interests. However, with his appointment as Crown Prince, we anticipate his increased involvement in representing Dubai on the international stage. End comment.

WILLIAMS